(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. As per the advance estimates of CSO, the growth rate of agricultural sector is likely to be 2.7% in the year 2006-07, which is less than the growth rate of 6% realised for the sector for the year 2005-06 (based on the Quick Estimates for 2005-06 of CSO).

Process of assessment of poverty

†4664. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the whole process of assessing poverty by the Planning Commission is arbitrary in which the assessment of poverty is done quite less than the actual situation;

(b) whether it is a fact that there are various agencies like the Ministry of Rural Development and the States to prescribe the norms of poverty and which also prescribe the status of BPL in the country; and

(c) whether Government would prescribe uniform norms for identifying the poor people in order to assess the people living below the poverty line?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) The Planning Commision estimates the incidence of poverty by counting the persons below an exogenous determined cut-off level of expenditure, known as the poverty line, from the consumption distribution obtained from the National Sample Survey data on household consumer expenditure. An Expert Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. D.T. Lakdawala with eminent persons as members finalised the methodology of poverty estimation that is now being used by the Planning Commission. The method used by the Planning Commission to estimate poverty is internationally accepted.

(b) and (c) The estimation of poverty by the Planning Commission and the BPL (Below Poverty Line) Census carried out by the Ministry of Rural Development to identify the BPL families in the rural areas are two separate exercises. The Planning Commission estimates the percentage and number of people living below the poverty line at national and state level from the large sample survey data on household consumer expenditure obtained

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

from the National Sample Survey Organization. The BPL Census carried out by the Ministry of Rural Development identifies the BPL households. For the purpose of identification of BPL families in the rural areas, a common methodology is used for all the States. For the Tenth Five Year Plan, the BPL Census 2002 has been conducted on the basis of the methodology of 'Score Based Ranking' of the rural households for which 13 socio-economic parameters have been used indicating the relative status of deprivation.

Regional trade agreement

4665. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Planning Commission is working towards a regional trade agreeement with China on the lines it entered with ASEAN;

(b) if so, whether such agreement would further increase the existing problem of cheap Chinese goods flooding our markets;

(c) in what manner Government propose to overcome the imminent threat; and

(d) if not, the manner in which the trade agreement would benefit both the nations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Regional Trade Agreements are formulated by the Ministry of Commerce. The Planning Commission has not proposed any such agreement.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Concentration of poor people in India

4666. SHRI DARA SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that world's larget poor people are concentrated in India; and